



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

September 13, 2005

News Release

ICE OFFICERS ARREST CHILD PREDATOR IN THE AUSTIN AREA *Mexican national convicted of child sexual assault*

AUSTIN, Texas — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention and Removal Operations, assisted by the Limestone Sheriff's Office, yesterday arrested a Mexican man as part of an ongoing national initiative called "Operation Predator."

Raul De La Cruz, 44, was arrested at his home in Mexia, Texas, without incident. De La Cruz entered the United States in 1980 and shortly afterwards applied for amnesty in 1986 which was available at that time. Just three years after becoming a permanent resident, Limestone Sheriff's Office arrested and charged De La Cruz with sexually assaulting a minor. He was convicted on the charge in August 1989, and received a five-year probation sentence. Under immigration law, as a convicted criminal alien, he became eligible for deportation.

"Arresting those who prey on our most vulnerable like De La Cruz is a high priority for ICE," said Marc J. Moore, ICE San Antonio field office director for Detention and Removal Operations. "We will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to take these criminals off the streets, and when possible, and deport them."

De La Cruz is being held at the South Texas Detention Center in Pearsall, Texas, pending the outcome of his immigration case.

Since Operation Predator began in July 2003, ICE has arrested more than 6,300 child predator throughout the country – an average of roughly 250 arrests per month and eight arrests per day. More than 560 Predator arrests have been made in Texas.

ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. Investigators staff this hotline around the clock.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.